



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good morning,

Thank you all for joining us at the Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner last week! It was great to see so many of you out at Chase Field to honor the Cactus League organization. The [Arizona Tourism Alliance](#), the [Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association](#) and the [Arizona Restaurant Association](#) did an outstanding job putting together such a wonderful event. And a special thanks to Daron Sutton for being an incredible master of ceremonies.

Congratulations to the award recipients, Governor Rose Mofford, Cactus League Association President Robert Brinton and Major League Baseball Senior Vice President of Baseball Operations Joe Garagiola Jr. for being honored as Arizona's Tourism Advocates of the Year.

We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's Unity Dinner!

Speaking of award recipients, the countdown has begun. You have until **Friday, April 16** to send in your nominations for the **Governor's Tourism Awards**! Be sure to check out the [submission rules](#) and [award categories](#). We've added a new category this year! More information can be found in the **AOT News** section below.

Also, the **Arizona Highways Travel Show** is coming up **May 22 and 23**. Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to promote your tourism assets directly to potential customers in the Phoenix market.

For more information, please read our **Industry News**.

Have a great week!

AOT News

New Update to AOT's Research Web site!

The following item has been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- [Arizona Tourism Indicators 4th Quarter 2009](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Melissa Elkins, Research Manager, at 602-364-3716 or via e-mail at melkins@azot.gov.

Arizona Office of Tourism Announces ATU Social Media Workshops!

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present the next series of highly-informative Arizona Tourism University workshops. This complimentary workshop series, titled **First Why, Then How: Creating a Social Media Strategic Roadmap**, will begin in March.

The series will be presented by Jay Baer, one of the world's most popular social media consultants and bloggers. He is the creator of the *7-step Social Media Strategic Planning Process* and the *Twitter 20* series of live Twitter interviews. An online marketing pioneer, he has worked with more than 700 companies - and 25 of the Fortune 1000 - since 1994.

Be sure to sign up today by sending your RSVP to ATURSV@azot.gov.

First Why, Then How: Creating a Social Media Strategic Roadmap complimentary workshops will be held from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. in the following locations: learnt

March 26

[Glendale Civic Center](#)

5750 West Glenn Drive
Glendale, AZ 85301

April 9

Webinar – presentation delivered right to your desktop!

To register, send your contact information to ATURSV@azot.gov.

AOT Now Accepting Nominations for Governor's Tourism Awards!

The Arizona Office of Tourism and our partners are busy coordinating plans for the next annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, July 12-14, at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson. The conference is the premier event for members of the travel industry to participate in dynamic work sessions and listen to informative guest speakers.

In addition to the conference, AOT coordinates the **Governor's Tourism Awards**, honoring individuals and organizations that have contributed noteworthy achievements over the past year to the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that have helped make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

AOT invites you to review the 2010 award categories and guidelines and submit nominations of individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the tourism industry. The winners will be awarded at the Governor's Tourism Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, July 13. All submissions must be received by **April 16, 2010**. Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) section of www.azot.gov for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms.

Look for future editions of **AOT in Action** for Governor's Conference on Tourism registration information!

AOT Events

Arizona Represented at Go West Summit

AOT attended the Go West Summit in Sacramento, California from February 1 – 4. Go West is an annual seminar and marketplace for tour operators and Western States regional tourism suppliers. There were approximately 100 operators from Europe, Latin America and Asia in attendance, in addition to many U.S. based receptive operators. The three-day event comprised of seminars and guest speakers, along with two days of pre-scheduled 12 minute appointments with the tour operators to review both their current and potential Arizona product. For more information or a copy of the report, please contact Hylton Fothergill at 602 364 3706 or via e-mail at hfothergill@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[Arizona Road Show in Mexico](#)

Date: March 16 – 18

Location: Mexico City

[Northern Exposure Press Trip](#)

Date: March 22 – March 27

Location: Williams, Grand Canyon, Flagstaff

[French Tour Operator Road Show](#)

Date: April – May

Location: Lille, Toulouse and Nantes

Industry News

Don't Miss the 7th Annual Forks & Corks Event –Thursday, April 8

Stars of the Valley's culinary scene join forces once again for a high-energy celebration of food and wine at the 7th annual Forks & Corks. More than 20 of the top chefs from renowned

restaurants and resorts will be on hand to prepare specialties from their respective menus. Guests will indulge in savory samplings while enjoying the jazz styling of local favorite, Doc Jones & Nayo. Tastings from boutique wineries and microbreweries will also be available, as well as a silent auction featuring opportunities to purchase Arizona getaways and gift certificates. This is a 21-and-over event. Forks & Corks will be held Thursday, April 8, 2010, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. and the Camelback Esplanade.

The event is presented by Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association (AzHLA) and the Arizona Restaurant Association (ARA) to promote the cuisine from Arizona's fine assortment of restaurants and resorts as well as salute the pairing expertise of vineyards from around the world. The event is also designed to benefit the educational efforts of the Arizona Hotel and Restaurant Education Foundations. For more tickets visit www.ForksandCorks.org or call 602-604-0729.

Follow Forks & Corks on Twitter at: www.Twitter.com/ForksandCorks and become a fan on Facebook!

SAVE the DATE: Arizona Highways Travel Show – May 22 & 23

The Arizona Highways Travel Show provides an opportunity for communities, along with industry-related organizations and companies to promote their tourism destinations directly to potential customers in the Phoenix market.

The Arizona Highways Travel Show had an extremely successful inaugural show last year and looks to build upon that success. More than 100 exhibitors participated in last year's event where more than 3,000 attendees were looking for travel locations and things to do in the summer and fall in Arizona.

Show Details:

Arizona Highways Travel Show
Phoenix Convention Center – Hall F
May 22 & 23, 2010
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

To register for a booth at the show:

www.arizonahighwaystravelshow.com

Booth prices start at: \$650.00

Rich Ripley
Arizona Highways Travel Show
Presented by KTVK - 3TV
480-838-9123
rich@azinco.com
www.arizonahighwaystravelshow.com

International Visitor Spending Down 7% in December

The Commerce Department says international visitors spent an estimated \$10.4 billion on travel to, and tourism-related activities within, the U.S. during the month of December-nearly \$845 million less, or 7 percent, than was spent in December 2008. It was the 14th-consecutive month

in which U.S. travel and tourism-related exports were lower when compared to the same period of the previous year. International visitors spent, on average, nearly \$1.7 billion less a month during 2009, resulting in a record-setting year-over-year decline of nearly \$20.1 billion in exports, a decrease of 14 percent from 2008. Total travel and tourism-related spending by Americans traveling abroad was \$98.2 billion, down nearly 13%. (*Special to TA; Travel Advance, March 9*)

The U.S. Hotel Industry Leading Indicator edged down January

The U.S. Hotel Industry Leading Indicator edged down 0.2 percent in January, the first monthly decrease after nine consecutive months of increases, according to economic research firm e-forecasting.com, which issued the data in conjunction with Smith Travel Research. The HIL went up 1.4 percent in December. The HIL, a monthly leading indicator for the U.S. hotel industry, is a composite indicator that, on average, leads the industry's business activity four to five months in advance. The latest increase brought the index to a reading of 109.7. The index was set to equal 100 in 2000. (*www.Travel Pulse.com, 3/8*)

Americans Once Again Are Rolling with their RVs

Elkhart, Ind., is the groundhog of the recovery. As home to much of what's left of the recreational vehicle industry, Elkhart has been the poster child of the Great Recession. It is regularly cited as an example of what's not working with the economy. So, when we say that signs of a recovery are appearing in the RV industry, let's hope Elkhart doesn't get frightened by its shadow and disappear for another six months. Like other early indicators of the recovery, this one is not as robust as we may like. RVs got hammered by soaring oil prices, the credit crunch, and the recession. People were turned off by the industry's gas-guzzling image. If they did have the resources to buy, they found credit had dried up and attractive purchase terms were hard to find.

As 2008 dragged into 2009, of course, fewer and fewer people had the resources to even think about buying an RV. Industry shipments of all RVs--from small towable campers to motor home luxury liners--cratered at fewer than 6,000 units a month as 2008 ended. For all of 2008, shipments totaled only 237,000 units, off by nearly a third from 2007, according to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association. And 2007 itself fell 10% short of 2006 glory days, when close to 400,000 new RVs were shipped. But sales started to pick up slowly later in 2009. And though annual shipments for the year were only 165,000 units--off another 30% from 2008--year-over-year monthly comparisons turned consistently positive. Forecasts for 2010 shipments exceed 200,000, according to the RVIA. (*www.USNews&WorldReport.com, 3/5; Travel Advance, March 9*)

Four Corners Makeover Promises Better Photo Ops

You can't stand in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah at one time any more — at least not until June 1, 2010. That's when the barriers will come down and the new Four Corners Monument is scheduled to re-open to the public, eager to participate in America's most famous photo-op.

"It's not deteriorating. It's just inadequate," said Cleal Bradford, executive director of the Four Corners Heritage Council. Plans have been in place to upgrade the monument since 1995, and a

token groundbreaking was even held in 2006. But Cleal said that disputes between the Navajo and Ute (who own various quadrants of the monument) kept the project in limbo until now.

We asked Cleal if the new monument has anything to do with rumors that the old Four Corners is in the wrong spot — miles wrong, according to some reports. “That was never the thought,” he answered, and assured us that three different Bureau of Land Management survey teams have “confirmed that it’s in the right place.” When the new monument is zeroed in, he said, “We’ve invited a BLM survey team to come back and make sure it gets in the right spot.”

According to Cleal, the problem with the old monument wasn’t its location, but that it wasn’t photo-friendly enough. Shutterbugs had to perch on unsteady, improvised high points to get snapshots of people splayed across four different states.

The new monument plaza, according to Cleal, will be sunk eight feet into the ground. Raised viewing platforms will jut out at the four compass points “so that everyone gets a chance to be facing home.” It sounds similar in design to the Center of the Nation monument in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, although the sunken plaza and elevated snapshot spots set a new standard in geographic photo-op design. When we told that to Cleal, he seemed pleased.

“The Indian people don’t move fast, but they usually move in the right direction,” he said. “We think it’s gonna be a beautiful spot.” (*Roadside American.com*, March 2)

FAA Forecasts 1 Billion Airline Passengers by 2023

Passengers on U.S. airlines will pay relatively small increases in airfares over the next 20 years, but they should expect more flights crowding the nation's busiest airports, the FAA said Tuesday. The government's revised aviation forecast, which was released at a conference in Washington Tuesday, backed away from a prediction made five years ago-before the recession-that more than 1 billion passengers a year will travel by air in 2015. The FAA now says it will take until 2023 to hit the 1 billion mark, indicating modest annual growth from the 704 million passengers carried in 2009 by U.S. airlines on both domestic and international flights. The FAA, calling the aviation industry a key economic driver, is forecasting that the effort to modernize and make the nation's airspace more safe will spur long-term sustained growth in air travel as well as the overall economic health for the U.S.

(*www.ChicagoTribune.com*, 3/9; *www.TravelPulse.com*, 3/9; *Travel Advance*, March 10)

U.S. Travel Creates New Council for Meetings, Trade Shows

The U.S. Travel Association announced Tuesday that it has created a new board member council that will conduct what the group calls a "proactive research, communications, government relations and promotion agenda." The Meetings, Incentives and Trade Show Council held its first strategy session on March 1 and challenged U.S. Travel to become a powerful collective voice for the industry and build capabilities that add to the activities of other meetings-related associations. U.S. Travel will develop a blueprint that clearly defines the industry's short- and long-term goals as well as hire an individual to manage the council and its initiatives on a daily basis. Fifteen industry representatives have been named to serve on the council. Co-chairs are Christine Duffy of Maritz Travel and Larry Luteran of Hilton Worldwide. (*Special to TA; Travel Advance*, March 10)

At ITB Berlin, Positive Signs

UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, speaking at the opening of this year's ITB Berlin Travel Trade Show, said the travel and tourism industry is leaving behind one of the most difficult years in history, after international tourist arrivals fell by 4 percent in 2009, with earnings estimated to have fallen by approximately 6 percent. He said the return of growth in the last quarter of 2009 and the first results from January 2010 suggests that recuperation is under way. In his framework, he forecast a growth of 3 percent to 4 percent in international tourist arrivals for 2010. ITB Berlin opened Wednesday with 11,127 exhibiting companies from 187 countries and is fully booked. From now through Sunday, more exhibitors than ever will be presenting their products and services. (www.TravelPulse.com; *Travel Advance*, March 11)

At ITB Berlin: U.S. Cities, States Discuss Global Tourism

The U.S. Travel Association and representatives of 21 U.S. destinations met during the ITB Berlin trade show to discuss the recent passage of the Travel Promotion Act, signed into law by President Obama on March 4. U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger Dow discussed details of the legislation and its goal to welcome more foreign visitors by establishing a global marketing and communications campaign while improving America's image and explaining new security policies to foreign travelers. Dow said the measure will help put America on a par with other destinations around the world that already have a national tourism office to help attract more international visitors.

"As the country's number-one port of entry for overseas visitors, we understand the importance of a new national marketing program along with more clarity regarding entry procedures," said George Fertitta, president and CEO of NYC & Company, who took part in the discussions. Funding for the program will be generated from private-sector contributions and up to \$1-million in public-sector matching funds. Public money will be generated from a \$10 fee on foreign travelers from countries not required to pay a \$131 fee for a visa to enter the U.S. (www.TravelPulse.com; *Special to TA*; *Travel Advance*, March 12)

U.S. Airlines Carry Fewer Passengers

U.S. airlines flew fewer passengers last year than at any time since 2004 and are likely to have a slower return to profitability than their peers in Asia and Latin America, according to two reports out Thursday. The number of domestic and international travelers ferried by U.S. carriers for all of 2009 dropped 5.3 percent from the year before, according to preliminary data released by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics. But the planes were fuller than ever, largely because airlines cut back on flights or moved to smaller planes. U.S. carriers set a record, with flights that were on average 80.4 percent full system wide in 2009, according to the report.

The International Air Transport Association reported that it expects the industry worldwide to lose \$2.8 billion this year-half of what it initially forecast. "It is still a loss, so it's too early for a party," said Giovanni Bisignani, IATA's CEO. "But now we can clearly see from the numbers that the industry situation is improving." (*Pages 1B, USA Today*; *B6, New York Times*; *Travel Advance*, March 12)

Association Executives Predict End to Recession

Economists aren't the only ones who've noticed early signs of an economic recovery. Association executives have, too, and are becoming more optimistic about their revenue forecasts because of it, according to a new study by ASAE and The Center for Association Leadership. Conducted between Jan. 26 and Feb. 2, the study, "Associations and CEOs: A Report on Two Studies During a Down Economy," found that 23.5 percent of association CEOs predict that their revenues will increase in the coming year, up from 11.6 percent in spring 2009, while 38.1 percent predict it will decrease, down from 63.9 percent. The survey also found that 11.4 percent of association CEOs believes membership will increase this year, up by more than 100 percent from 4.9 percent in spring 2009. (*www.MiMegasite.com*, 3/10; *Travel Advance*, March 12)

Global Airline Capacity Exceeding Pre-Recession Levels

The growth in global airline capacity this month has exceeded not only 2009 but 2008, before the onset of the global recession, according to OAG, the aviation data company, in its monthly report on trends in airline seats and flights. The OAG schedule information indicates that the total number of seats available in March will increase by 5 percent over 2009. The total number of seats available in March 2010 is 303.1 million, compared to 289.8 million in 2009, and 299.6 million in 2008. "March capacity is rebounding and 2010 exceeds not only that of a year ago, but of the same month in 2008, before the start of the global recession. This growth in worldwide capacity signals increased confidence in travel demand," said Peter von Moltke, CEO of UBM Aviation. (*www.TravelPulse.com*, 3/11; *Travel Advance*, March 12)

Survey Finds Travel Agents Optimistic About Future

Amadeus revealed the results of its recent survey in which North American travel agents were invited to share their outlook on the travel industry and how emerging trends are poised to reshape their business as the economy begins to recover. Almost 800 travel professionals responded to the 16-question survey conducted online from Feb. 12-19. One of the key survey outcomes is that, even in the face of current marketplace challenges, North American travel professionals are optimistic about the future-for their own business as well as for the industry overall, said Tom Cates, chief commercial officer for Amadeus. Among other trends is the increased role of technology in trip planning and actual travel and the opportunity for technology to further improve the travel experience. Respondents also expect next-generation travelers to get more "social" and increase their use of social networking to research and book travel. A third trend indicates the growth of niche travel, with major opportunities for agents in family-friendly travel, weddings and adventure travel. (*www.TravelPulse.com*, 3/11; *Travel Advance*, March 12)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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